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ABSTRACT

A guide to writing effective proposals that are designed to funding for specific projects is presented. The need to clearly identify the nature of project--its design, its anticipated outcomes, and the needs which the project is addressing--is described as the crucial first step in the grantswriting process. Next, the importance of the prospectus (a capsule version of the proposal) is examined--what it is and its components. The proposal structure and content is then discussed within the following areas: (1) the need/problem being addressed; (2) the objectives to be achieved; (3) the methodology that is planned for achieving the objectives; and (4) how much the project is anticipated to cost. The budgetary process is examined in a separate chapter with discussions on anticipating project costs, the standard costs to be considered, and indirect costs. Some thoughts concerning matching funds are also included. Finally, the handbook presents information on the variety of support services that the Oklahoma State University's Office of Education Research provides to assist researchers in their search for external funding for research, instructional, or service activities. (GLR)

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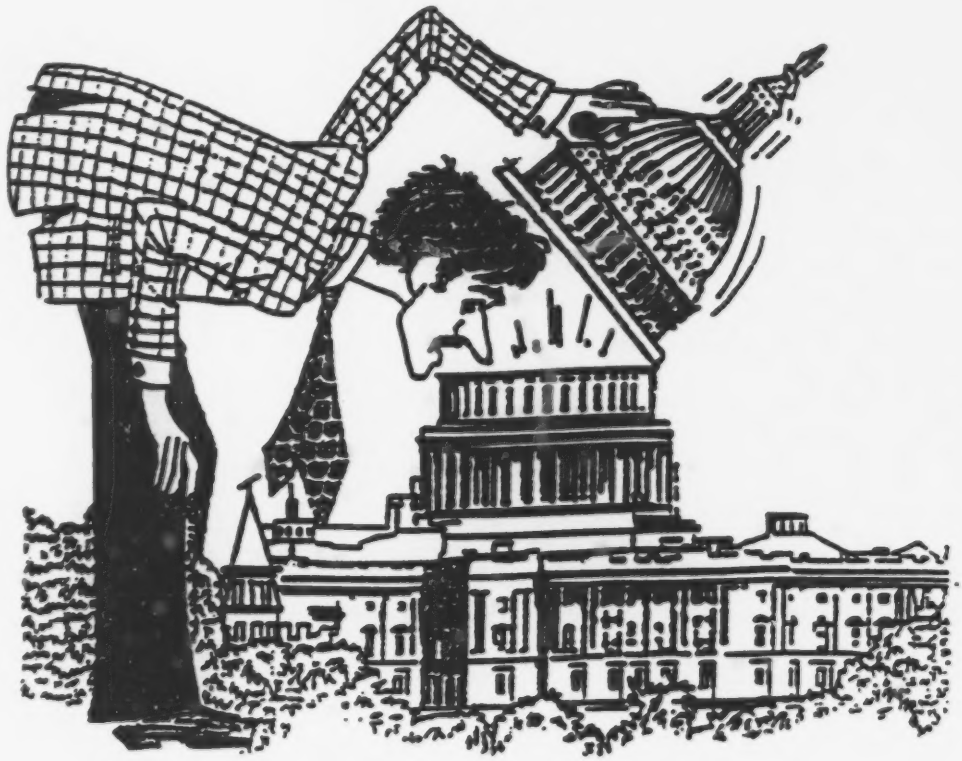

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College of Education
Research Handbook

A MANUAL FOR PROPOSAL

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

WITHIN THE

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Prepared By
Paul G. Kussrow
Director of Education Research

1990

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II. PROPOSAL WRITING - TAKING THE FIRST STEP

Proposal writing is a process. It is both a viable mechanism for obtaining funding for specific projects, and a means of conceptualizing the project to be funded. Taking this "process" as a means of conceptualizing the project enables the potential principal investigator (PI) to work through the project design in order to achieve clarity. All good grant proposals begin with a well defined project. Therefore, before even the first word of a grant proposal is committed to paper, the concept of the project to be described should be well thought out. This is the crucial first step in the grantswriting process--all other steps "build" upon this. Let us examine how this might be accomplished.

There are successful grants writers who first examine what funding is available in a general area and develop a project specifically for that funding priority. However, by and large, the best proposals are developed by project directors who, because of their own expertise, are able to identify a need or problem and to design appropriate, effective solutions.

In conceptualizing the project, one might ask the following questions:

- What is the need to be addressed?
- Of what significance is it, and to whom?
- How was this need determined?
- If there is a need for laboratory equipment, for example, how was this discovered, what benefit will be realized in securing it, and who will benefit?
- If research is to be done, why should it be done and will it yield a practical, useful result?
- To whom will the result be important?
- What related research has been done on this topic in the past, and how is the present research a departure or addition to past results?
- If service is to be performed, who and how many will benefit from it?

The answers to these questions will later form the part of the written proposal called the needs assessment. If the potential project principal investigator cannot effectively answer these questions, the project stands little chance of funding.

The principal investigator should next honestly evaluate his/her capabilities to remedy or investigate the identified problem and consider how these capabilities can best be demonstrated to a funding agency. Again, the principal investigator might ask these questions:

- Is the project directly related to my specific area of expertise?
- Have I had experience in projects of similar nature?
- Is there documented evidence of my capabilities or understanding of the problems (i.e. publications, presentations, previous research)?

One could also consider the environment in which the project is to be conducted as part of the consideration of capability. For example, is the project director's institution noted for public service, instruction, and/or research? Are the facilities to be used exemplary in any way? Can the location of the institution provide access to the necessary population to be served by the project?

Anticipating the Project Outcome

Obviously, there is a direct relationship between the project director's ability to remedy the problem and the need itself. So, too, is there a corresponding relationship between the targeted need, the capability of the applicant/proposer, and what will be accomplished by the project. In identifying the needs, the project director tries to envision who will benefit from the project or what practical yield will result. By quantifying this result (i.e. how many, to what extent) the goal or objective of the project can be effectively stated. The sound relationship between

the need, the results expected, and the ability of the principal investigator/ institution to achieve these results is essential to a well developed project concept.

Activities: The Project in Action

From this point, the principal investigator can begin to envision the action he/she must initiate in order to accomplish the goal or objective of the project. Again, these activities must maintain the same relationship to the need, applicant capability and objectives of the project as they do to each other. The activities of the project sample reinforce the design that has already been established. Questions that the project director should ask in considering action to be taken might include:

- Are these actions appropriate in accomplishing project objectives?
- Is the methodology appropriate for the proposed research?
- Are the necessary statistics available, or must they be compiled?
- Will additional help be necessary, and if so, how will it be secured?
- How will the target population be accessed?
- What will the "deliveries" of the project be (i.e. programming, special testing, services)?
- Who will design and implement these?
- What can be utilized that is already operational?

There are several other questions which will occur to the principal investigator which lead to activity steps specifically related to his/her projects. The only caution that might be mentioned in envisioning the activities of the project is to keep these in logical, chronological order, so that one step obviously follows the other, and, taken together, all contribute to the achievement of the project's goal.

This part of the process serves yet another purpose. Activities which are beyond the capability of the principal investigator or his/her institution must be eliminated or scaled down. Activities which are essential to the project's goals, yet cannot be done within the necessary time frame, or with the limited population available can serve to point out flaws in the overall project design. Unmanageable or far too numerous activities will often serve as indicators that the identified need or problem is too unwieldy and should be reconsidered or redefined. Too few activities may point out that the project could be enlarged, or even that the need is too insignificant to receive funding. Thus, the interrelationship of the steps in conceptualizing the project serves as a set of checks and balances for the project direction.

The process of project design is likewise linked to the process of proposal writing. Once the relationship between need, capability, and remedy of that need; determination of desired outcome of the project; and action necessary to effect that outcome is clearly understood, the proposal becomes a relatively simple document to prepare.

It is this process, envisioning the interrelationship of its essential components, that brings clarity to the proposal itself, and ultimately, greatly enhances the chances of successful funding. The following section will examine the successive steps in proposal writing which lead to a well written proposal, beginning with the development of a prospectus.

III. THE PROSPECTUS

What Is a Prospectus?

Even the experienced proposal writer often feels a bit intimidated by the prospect of writing a grant proposal. Much of this intimidation is caused by simple misunderstanding of what a proposal is and how it works. The section of the manual on "Structure and Content of the Basic Proposal" addresses this misunderstanding and seeks to alleviate the resulting intimidation.

Often, however, the potential proposal writer is discouraged by the seeming magnitude of the task of preparing a grant application. Having seen only completed proposals that are often many pages in length, the new proposal writer is given the impression that the task of proposal writing is overwhelming. Thus, there is a reluctance to begin.

In concert with the overall idea that grantswriting is a process, an excellent approach to overcome this sense of intimidation is to "grow" your proposal. A very successful tool in this process is the prospectus. Loosely defined, the prospectus is a short (3-5 page) version of a grant proposal which contains the essential elements of a full proposal and presents the same argument. The brevity of the prospectus is a key to its success. Anyone can write three to five pages on a subject about which he/she feels strongly. The task is one of easily manageable size. In addition, the constraints of this length will encourage the writer to consider his/her argument in very concrete terms; as a result, the argument will be formulated in its most concise manner.

Uses of the Prospectus

The prospectus has some other very useful roles in addition to providing a starting point. Four common roles are:

1. A Proving Ground for the Idea. The prospectus is ideally suited to help the proposal writer examine the crucial questions: Why? What? How? By whom? For what cost? It will help the writer identify those parts of the argument that need strengthening either through documentation or rethinking. It will help the writer conceptualize the logical steps that must be followed for the idea to become reality. Finally, it will help the writer begin to determine the resources that the project will require.

2. A Pre-Proposal to an Agency. A present trend that is rapidly growing in popularity is the use of a prospectus as an early point of contact with a funding agency. The prospectus enables the proposal writer to have an idea reviewed and critiqued *before* the effort of writing a full proposal has been undertaken. Most funding agencies or organizations welcome the opportunity of reviewing a short presentation of a proposal project and offering honest, helpful advice. Some agencies even *require* pre-proposal submission. The prospectus is ideal for this purpose.

3. A Pre-Proposal for Critique by Colleagues. In most cases, a grant proposal will be reviewed by one's peers. Therefore, the chances of funding can be increased by having colleagues review and critique your idea and basic argument prior to proposal submission. With the all too familiar "time-crunch" of preparing a full proposal for submission, there is simply not enough opportunity to have it read and critiqued and then to incorporate appropriate revisions. The prospectus can help in this regard by serving as a "concept paper" which colleagues can critique *while the full proposal is still under development.* Thus, the suggestions of colleagues can easily be utilized to ensure that no glitches in the final proposal will make the decision of whether or not you will receive funding.

4. A Proposal Itself. Brevity in proposals is a modern, welcome trend. In fact, many Federal agencies have established page limitations for proposals, and proposals to foundations and other private funding sources should be as brief and concise as possible to be effective. For these reasons, a prospectus that has been carefully rewritten can often serve as a proposal itself.

The possible uses of a prospectus are not mutually exclusive, of course. Some prospectuses may serve all these functions, and in that way provide the grantswriter with a valuable tool.

Components of the Prospectus

The prospectus, like the proposal, must contain certain components in order to be effective. Generally, these components will be:

1. The NEED for the project.
2. The OBJECTIVES to be attained in order to alleviate that NEED or solve the problem.
3. The METHODOLOGY which will be undertaken to accomplish each of these OBJECTIVES.
4. A BUDGET.

Each of these sections can be developed easily by answering a few relevant questions:

NEED	• Why do you want to do this project? • Why is the project needed? • What, specifically, is the problem, need, or question to be addressed by the project? • What is the extent of the problem? • Why is the need, problem, or question significant?

NEED (continued)	• What work has already been accomplished or begun on this issue by you or by others? • Why/Where has this previous work fallen short? • Who are you? What is the relationship between this problem and your organizational mission or personal expertise? • Why are you or your organization the proper entity to work on this problem? What is special about you, your organization, or location that makes you the appropriate entity to work on this problem?

An effective NEED section will answer most, if not all, of these questions. As you can see, the NEED section simply demands an understanding of the important issues; an understanding of relevant literature or work by others; an understanding of the relationship between the problem and you; and most of all, some careful, analytical thinking.

These questions should help you formulate your project objectives. Remember that objectives are not action steps. They are, instead, the measurable results of action steps. In that regard, try to begin objectives with the infinitive form of a verb (i.e. to improve, achieve, reduce, answer).

OBJECTIVES	• What do you want to accomplish? • What goals must be reached for the project to succeed? • What are the phases of the project that must be completed if the project is to succeed? (For this question, think of "phases" as elements, not time periods.) • When will you accomplish each objective?

The METHODOLOGY section is your plan of action. As such, it should be logical, chronological, and specific. It is a general principle in proposal writing that "details make the difference," and this axiom is nowhere more true than in the METHODOLOGY section. Omitted details lead to questions, and unanswered questions lead to proposal rejection. The reader of a METHODOLOGY section should know exactly what you plan to do. The prospectus can help you clarify your plan by letting you see the project as a progression of actions which are dependent on one another. Thus, any gaps in you plan can be identified and steps designed to fill them.

METHODOLOGY	• What do you want to accomplish? • What, specifically, are you going to do? • When will you begin and end each activity? • Who will carry out the activity? • Is there something special about this activity or approach, and if so, what is special about it?

The BUDGET section should present, usually in line item format, those resources/funds which are required by the project. Be sure to include sufficient funds to carry out the project's activities. It is generally a good principle to determine your needs as closely as possible and try to allow for cost increases between the time of proposal submission and project initiation. The prospectus is an excellent planning tool as you seek to develop an idea into a project. It is short and easy to write, but its benefits are many. As a beginning stage, the prospectus will allow you to conceptualize the logical argument that constitutes any grant

proposal. It can be (and is in many cases) the first tangible step in receiving funding for a project you would like to do.

BUDGET	• What resources will the project require? • Are there personnel needed? • What percentage of time will they be involved in the project? • Will you need funds for project administration such as supplies or communications? • Will travel funds be needed? • Will funds be needed for educational supplies? • Will you need equipment funds? • What other expenditures will the project incur?

IV. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The Basic Components

While it would be presumptuous to state that proposal writing is easy, it is certainly true that a proposal can be written without an inordinate amount of difficulty by using a process approach. If you have read previous sections of this manual, you will note that a prospectus can be "built" in sections that have a structure of their own, but interconnect directly. This same approach will work equally well in the writing of a full proposal.

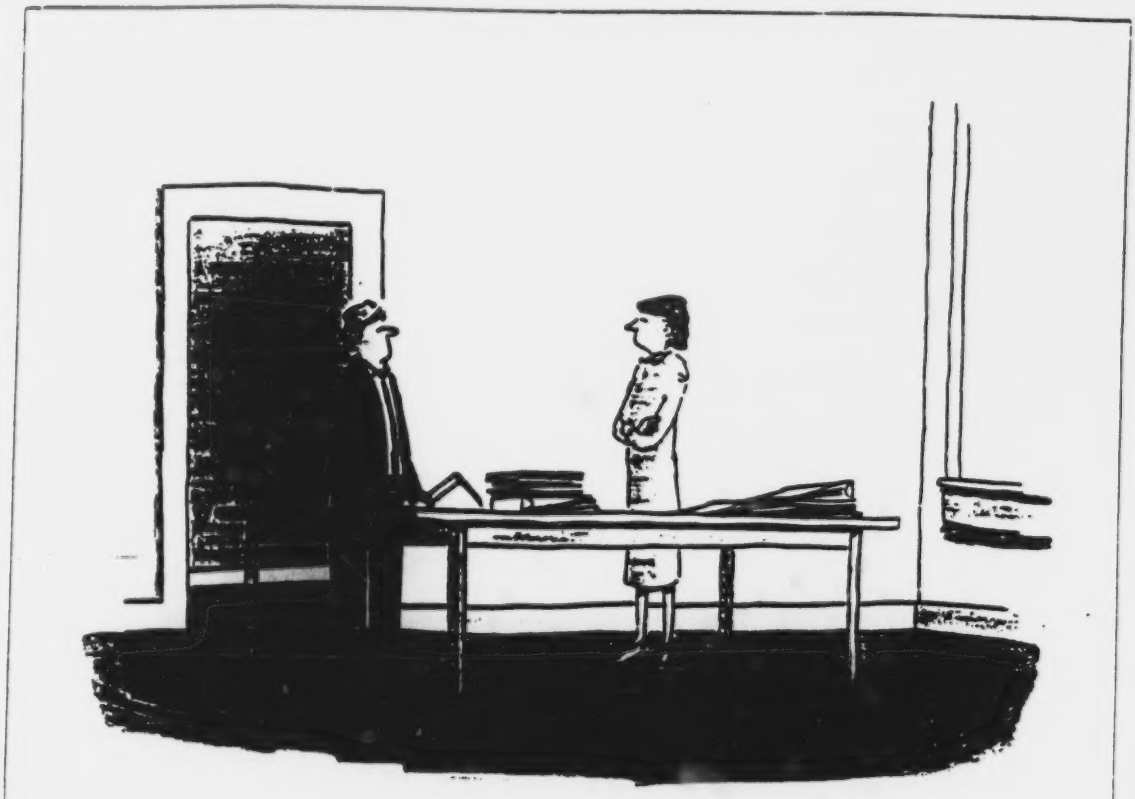
Oftentimes the funding agency will prescribe the proposal sections it requires through guidelines or application information. Very often, the agency will also establish a format into which these sections must be arranged. Despite this lack of uniformity, there are four sections, which you have worked with in condensed form already in the prospectus, that are almost always required and which form the basis of the proposal. Each of these proposal sections will be discussed in detail later in this part of the manual.

1. The NEED for the project.
2. The OBJECTIVES of the project.
3. The METHODOLOGY of the project.
4. The BUDGET for the project.

In addition to these requirements, guidelines will often contain a listing of those criteria upon which the proposal will be evaluated while under review. The effective proposal writer is one who can present the required information in the prescribed format in such a way as to address the evaluation criteria. Keep in mind that the proposal's reviewers will utilize these criteria as a checklist as they evaluate the relative merit of the proposed project. As the writer completes the

proposal, section by section, each criteria should be addressed. This technique of "writing backwards" will ensure that the reviewers will be able to identify how you have addressed each of the issues upon which they will base their recommendations.

As with the prospectus, a proposal would present a logical argument establishing clearly that there is a significant problem or need to be addressed; that there are objectives whose attainment will alleviate that need or solve that problem; that there are manageable, effective activities which will enable you to attain these objectives; and that certain resources are needed to carry out these activities. The following sections of a proposal present this argument.



"Rule of thumb: The foundation's trustees will consider proposals of six ounces or less. The others you reject."

Need/Problem Statement:

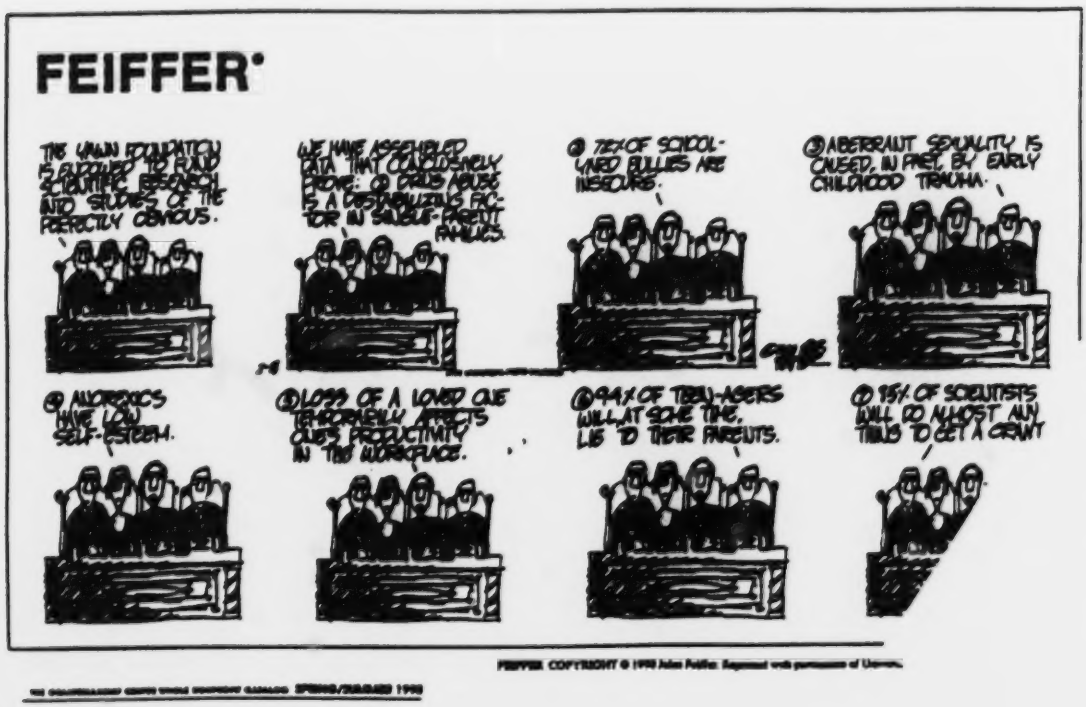
Why Do You Want to Do the Project?

Grant proposals of all kinds are usually defined in terms of a demonstrable need, a problem requiring a solution, or a question that needs to be answered. The NEED section of a proposal should describe this need, problem, or question concisely. An effective NEED statement requires documentation that demonstrates both your knowledge of the issues to be addressed and your familiarity with similar work on the same issue. A brief review of relevant literature can greatly strengthen this section, as can statistics or other supportive data which establish the need in its most concrete terms.

A subtle, but very important, aspect of this section is its point of view. NEED is always expressed in terms of "others" and not the applicant whether the project is for service, training, or research, the beneficiaries of the proposed work should be the clients to be served, the students to be taught, or the scholars for whom the work will be important. It is also important, however, that the NEED section include information relating the issues of the project with the capabilities and interests of the applicant. After all, a funding agency must be convinced both that the problem is significant and that the applicant is the appropriate entity to work on a solution. A review of the literature and/or sufficient documentation of the need will help in this regard, but it can also be very effective to relate the problem in question to the mission of the applicant (especially for organizational grants) or to previous work on that problem by the applicant.

The NEED section should be as specific as possible. Many proposals fail because their need statement lacks focus. The issues to be considered should be narrowed to the extent that the proposed project itself can make a significant

impact. Once again, the guidelines can be very helpful in determining the precise problem areas which the agency would like to see addressed.


FEIFFER
THE MAIN JUSTIFICATION IS SUPPOSED TO FUND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INTO STUDIES OF THE PSYCHOTIC OBVIOUS.
WE HAVE ASSEMBLED DATA THAT CONCLUSIVELY PROVE: (1) DRUG ABUSE IS A DESTABILIZING FACTOR IN SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES.
(2) 72% OF SCHOOL-YARD BULLIES ARE INSECURE.
(3) ABERRANT SEXUALITY IS CAUSED, IN PART, BY EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAUMA.
(4) WORKAHOLICS HAVE LOW SELF-ESTEEM.
(5) LOSS OF A LOVED ONE TEMPORARILY AFFECTS ONE'S PRODUCTIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE.
(6) 94% OF TEEN-AGERS WILL AT SOME TIME, LIE TO THEIR PARENTS.
(7) 95% OF SCIENTISTS WILL DO ALMOST ANYTHING TO GET A GRANT

Objectives:

What Do You Want to Accomplish?

When you have established a clearly demonstrated need for a project, the task of developing good project objectives is one of focusing on specific aspects of that need and defining those goals which must be accomplished in order for the need to be alleviated, the problem to be solve, or the question to be answered. Do

not confuse these accomplishments with activities. Project objectives are the focus around which activities will be based. In simple terms, the project's objectives should begin with the infinitive form of the verb, implying that the activities of the proposed project will lead to their attainment.

Good project objectives are reasonable, measurable, and specific. It is very important for the proposal to present clearly that the scope of the project is consistent with the capabilities of the applicant, and can really be accomplished in a finite time frame with finite available resources. Since the objectives determine the scope of the project, they should be reasonably attainable under the applicable limitations. Thus, an objective such as "to reduce hunger in the U.S." could reasonably be converted to "to reduce hunger in Payne County."

It is also very important that the principal investigator of a project can realistically evaluate the progress and success of a project. In order to do this effectively, the project objectives presented in the proposal must be measurable. In almost every instance, objectives should be quantifiable. (If nothing else, an objective can be made quantifiable by specifying a time limit for its attainment.) Thus, when designing proposal objectives also consider what mechanism would be most appropriate to measure the progress or success of work towards an objective. Once again, since project objectives determine the scope of the project, it is important that they present what you hope to accomplish in the most concrete possible terms. As in the NEED section of a proposal, numbers, percentages, dates, and other specific data will strengthen the objective and demonstrate to the reader that you have realistically assessed the problem and designed a project that will have a measurable impact on it. Thus, a better objective than the one above might be "to reduce the number of malnourished people in Payne County by 50 percent."

Very closely related to the idea of measurability is the recurrent need in proposal writing for specificity. A specific, detailed objective indicates to the reader that the proposal writer has determined the precise areas of the NEED that warrant attention, and has focused effort on these areas in a reasonable, attainable way. Thus, an even better objective might be "to reduce the number of malnourished elderly people in Payne County by 50 percent by providing one well-balanced meal (600 calories) to them through existing senior citizens services."

One final point should be made concerning the measurability of objectives. Clearly, not all objectives will be quantifiable--some will require qualitative evaluation. If this is the case, the proposal writer should be very careful to include a description of whatever instrument will be used in the next section of the proposal--METHODOLOGY.

Methodology:

How Are You Going to Get It Done?

The METHODOLOGY section of a proposal should describe (once again in as much detail as possible) the activities which will be undertaken to attain the objectives. Many unsuccessful proposals have failed simply because there was lack of sufficient detail and/or because the activities lacked form and direction. Although it may lead to seemingly simplistic writing, each activity should be presented in light of how it directly contributes to the accomplishment of one or more objectives.

Oftentimes a simple numbering system is helpful in this regard. All activities focused on objective 1 can be numbered 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and so forth. A system like this will also help the proposal writer think in terms of a chronology of objectives and a necessary ordering of activities. Many times, this approach will

aid the writer in identifying additional objectives or in reducing the project scope to a manageable level.

In addition to an explication of those activities that will be undertaken, the METHODOLOGY section often contains a rationale for the particular approach to be adopted. As before, the close relationship among need and objectives is crucial. The rationale is related directly to both the need or problem to be address and the objectives which are proposed. In other words, the chosen methodology is the most appropriate for the particular problem or issue in question, and is the best way to accomplish the objectives you have determined will alleviate that need or solve that problem.

As in all aspects of proposal writing, detail is absolutely crucial. Your activities should answer the basic questions: When? Where? How? By whom? Otherwise, the proposal reviewers will certainly notice these omissions and your proposal will not be rated as highly. Questions in the minds of reviewers lead to rejected proposals, so find the answers in the proposal development process and then present them clearly and in a detailed manner in the proposal.

Budget:

How Much Is It going to Cost?

The proposal budget is of particular concern to many proposal writers because they feel inexperienced in assigning dollar values to the activities. However, an effective proposal budget can be developed easily if the project director takes an orderly approach and adheres to several elementary budgeting principles.

Because the budget is often the most difficult proposal section for faculty members, a separate section has been dedicated to it in this manual. Thus, at this

point, discussion of budget preparation will focus only on a possible budgeting approach and on some basic principles.

First, you should view the budget as an explanation of those resources needed to accomplish the objectives of the project. In other words, you should begin your budget planning by determining what resources (people, travel, supplies, equipment, and the like) must be present for the project to succeed.

Second, you should always plan on having enough resources. Not only will a project requesting insufficient funding fare poorly in the review process (reviewers being aware that only so much can be accomplished for each dollar awarded), but in the event of funding you will face the eminent problem of not being able to carry out your project with the available funds.

Third, you should attempt to determine the most accurate cost for the required resources. Estimations of costs indicate to reviewers that a lack of care has been present during the proposal development stage. To many reviewers this indicates that a similar absence of care will be present during project execution, an impression that will make funding highly unlikely. In addition, careful cost planning and calculation in the development stage will make project management much easier. With this careful planning, the proposal writer can eliminate many problems such as shortfalls in certain line items and wasted funds in others. Also, budget estimates are notoriously low because they generally do not adequately take into account expenditures that may be "hidden," such as fringe benefits or costs incurred due to inflation.

All of the proposal can be integrated into an approach for budget development. An effective budget can be developed by relating costs to the individual activities involved in the project. Cost estimates can be determined for these activities in each of a number of categories, including personnel, space,

equipment, supplies, travel, communications, and administrative costs. By basing a cost estimate on proposed activities, the budget should reflect the interrelationship between activities, objectives, and need. Thus, the logical flow of the proposal continues through the BUDGET section.

A further explanation of BUDGET development is located as a separate section of this manual. As in all sections of a proposal, clarity is crucial as is the interrelationship among the components of the proposal argument. The successful proposal consists of well thought out and written sections on NEED, OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY, and BUDGET and will integrate these sections into a logical, convincing argument for funding.

V. THE BUDGET

THE PROJECT IN $$ SIGNS

The budget often presents what might appear to be an immense obstacle to the beginning proposal writer. While many faculty are quite comfortable in developing an idea within their specific discipline, the task of putting dollar figures to their project is confusing. Actually, the proposal budget is a relatively simple task. Indeed, many experienced proposal writers are able to estimate their project budget quite accurately even before the proposal is written. Perhaps the best way to visualize the budget is to think in terms of the written proposal. All the logical rules that apply to developing the body of the proposal are equally effective in developing the accompanying budget.

For this reason many proposal writers think in terms of writing the budget, just as they write their proposal, and thus, the addition of budget items is simply a natural addition to the project design.

Earlier in this manual proposal writing was described as a process. Prospective proposal writers were encouraged to first conceptualize their project, using simple questions leading to identification of need, how the need was to be met, and the qualifications of the individual to accomplish this task. It was suggested that these questions be further developed into full proposal segments, each linked to the others in logical, sequential structure. The budget is then an expansion of this process, a mechanism whereby the cost of the project activities directly reflects the scope of the project, assists the reviewer in evaluating cost versus target audience, and is directly linked to the project activities.

Anticipating Project Costs

There are two parts to the budget: (1) the budget summary and (2) the budget description. While the description usually follows the summary and serves as clarification of the summary's line items, it is best to begin with that section, as it encourages the writers to think through the request directly in terms of the proposal project. Writing the description first will also ease the transition between the more familiar written format and the purely monetary one of the budget summary.

The most obvious way to approach a budget is to visualize the project. What personnel will be needed to complete the task? What resources must be obtained that are not already available? What materials must be purchased? How much travel will be required of project staff? What equipment will be necessary? Will there be need for outside consultants and/or evaluators? Who will direct the project and for what period of time? What are university rates for fringe benefits and indirect costs? As you can see, these questions can be readily answered by considering the project activities. If the proposal has been carefully written, the activities have been designed to achieve the project's objectives, which in turn address the identified need. The process of proposal writing has made budget preparation a simple matter.

There are numerous agency forms for budget preparation, and when preparing a budget to be submitted to a specific agency it is best to utilize their format and to adhere to their regulations in such matters as indirect cost and allowable expenditures. These regulations will be easily discernable from agency guidelines.

Standard Costs to Consider

While budget formats may change, there are standard costs that should be included in most budget requests. Again, these have been alluded to in above questions, and are directly linked to the other components of the proposal.

Personnel. Who will do the project, and how long will they take to do it? How much will each individual's salary be? Will any of these costs be supported by the institution, or will all salary costs be requested from the funding sources?

Under the personnel line the proposer should also consider whether or not consultants will be used in completing the project, and if so, what the cost will be for each. This line item is usually state in terms of days with the rate per day stated for each consultant.

Fringe Benefits. What costs will be incurred in support of the salary line item? What is the institutional rate for retirement, salary continuation, social security and other items? These costs are usually available to the proposal writer from either the Office of Education Research (X48037) or Grants and Contracts (X46067).

Once personnel costs, including fringe benefits, have been determined, the proposer should consider the non-personnel aspects of the project budget. The more likely entries are:

Cost for space. Where will the project be housed? Will this space be contributed by the applicant institution, or must it be secured through grant funds?

Rental, Lease or Purchase of Equipment. Will the equipment necessary to the project be available from the applicant institution, or must it be secured in some other manner? Equipment can be a variety of items, and some

agencies offer grants programs which are specifically for the purpose of equipment, while others severely restrict equipment purchases in their funding regulations. Again, the guidelines of the funding program will indicate allowable costs.

Travel. In computing the travel section of the budget, the proposer must have clearly in mind the overall project design. Who will travel and to what locations? How often must this travel take place? What portion of the travel will be in-state, and what portion will be out-of-state? Once these questions have been answered, it becomes relatively simple to ascertain the individual's cost per trip. OSU requires that travel regulations of the state apply to externally funded projects as well, so in-state/out-of-state per diem figures can be utilized in figuring travel costs.

Telephone. While this may be a difficult cost to project, it is a good rule of thumb to examine previous phone bills within an office or department and to attempt to project how much in excess of that amount the phone costs of the project might be. Add this estimate to the cost of monthly service, and the telephone line item can be fairly accurately described.

Other Costs. Other costs can differ greatly, dependent upon the nature of the project. Computer time, purchases of special materials, etc., all can fall into this "catch-all" category. Proposal writers should examine their proposal content carefully to ensure that such items have been adequately covered.

A Word About Matching Funds

In describing the typical proposal budget, reference was made to applicant contributions to the project. This is known as "matching funds" and can take two forms: cash and in-kind. Cash match is quite simply the cash that has been promised by the applicant to be spent specifically for the project. Agencies are

very strict in their cash match requirements and often demand tangible proof that such expenditures on the part of the institution have been made.

There are times when the applicant is given the opportunity to raise this match over a given period of time. This usually occurs in the awarding of challenge grants where the applicant is given the incentive of raising funds by the promise of matching funding from the funding agency. Otherwise, the applicant is expected to demonstrate its cash match obtained during a finite project period through documented expenditures.

In-kind contributions are more commonly utilized in proposals, as these are more flexible and therefore more easily obtained. Items such as release time for faculty, part-time release of a departmental secretary, diversion of allocated department funds for travel support for the project director and more are examples of in-kind match.

Within the budget these matching funds are shown in a separate column from the funds requested. Match is often used by proposal writers as a means of demonstrating the institution's sanction or commitment to the project.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are funds provided in the grant to cover the institutional costs of operating the project. These costs include those associated with the physical plant (physical space, heating, lights, etc.), the fiscal management of the grant, and the operation of the entire grants support system. Federal agencies operate with a predetermined rate for calculating indirect costs--usually a percentage of total project costs or a percentage of the cost of personnel. State agencies, private foundations, and corporations vary in their indirect cost policies. Specific information on the appropriate approach to indirect cost for a specified project can

be acquired from the Office of Education Research or Grants and Contracts Financial Administration. Since indirect costs exist to cover real expenses incurred by the university in operating a project, such costs will be included in the budget whenever allowed by the funding agency. Any exceptions need to be approved by the administration.

VI. SERVICES:

OFFICE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH

The Office of Education Research fulfills an essential role in the mission of the College of Education. A major portion of that mission involves a commitment to providing support to enhance the scholarly climate in the College, both for faculty and staff within the College. To this end, a variety of services related to the acquisition of both external funding and internal resources for the support of professional activities are available through this office.

A full range of support services involved in the process of acquiring external funding for research, instructional, and service activities are available in the Office of Education Research. Although the office is not in the business of writing proposals, personnel are able to provide professional assistance at all stages of proposal preparation, from proposal idea development to the processing and mailing of proposals. Office personnel are prepared to assist you according to your own individual needs and are willing to become involved at any stages of proposal preparation that you desire: Our basic goal is to help as much as needed without getting in the way. Our intent is to help each researcher become confident and capable of conducting sponsored and unsponsored research activities. These stages and the type of assistance available are discussed below.

The Conceptualization of Proposal Ideas

All you must have to initiate assistance from the office is an idea. Office personnel are available for consultation in developing an idea into a potentially fundable project. Obviously, you are the expert in you discipline or field, but because of experience in grantswriting, office personnel can be invaluable in

assisting you to "talk through" an idea so it can begin to acquire the sort of focus necessary for a proposal.

In grantswriting, nothing can substitute for a good, creative idea, but that idea must be expressed in ways that are convincing to potential funding sources. As mentioned earlier, grantswriting is a process and the first step is sound conceptualization. An initial meeting with someone in the office can be profitable for formulating a good idea in the proper way. This process can be applied to all of your major research interests thus resulting in a number of fundable ideas. Often this process will include a review of literature for each research interest area.

The Location and Screening of Potential Funding Sources

One of the primary ways for the office to assist proposal writers is in the location of funding sources. Good ideas must be targeted toward potential funding sources. All funding sources--federal, state, or private--establish limits and priorities for projects they are interested in funding. Once a proposal idea is conceptualized, it is important to find out what potential funding sources are available, since the particular proposal form that will develop from the idea will depend on the guidelines and priorities of the agency or foundation from which you are seeking support. The office maintains files on major federal, state, and private sources of funding which contain program description, application forms, annual reports, and other relevant material. In addition, a library describing various funding opportunities is available and regular mailings discussing the latest funding information (*Federal Register* and *Federal Grants and Contracts Weekly*, and others) are received. You will automatically receive possible funding source announcements and their submission deadline information if you remain active

with the Office of Education Research. Staff are available to conduct funding searches for faculty who have a general proposal idea so that potential funding sources may be identified.

Once a number of sources are identified the office staff will assist you with the screening of potential sources and their application procedures. Tips on how to arrange and conduct telephone or face-to-face interviews with funding sources are also available from the Office of Education Research, and on occasion seed money for trips to granting agencies is available through the office.

Convincing Interested Collaborators

Once an academic home for the potential grant is agreed upon, it is recommended a meeting of all affected or interested parties be held. The office can assist the principal investigator in identifying participants and call the meeting. The funding source's guidelines are revised, specific roles are discussed, and 28 deadlines are agreed to during this planning conference.

The Development of a Prospectus

The most difficult step in writing a grant proposal is to begin to commit one's ideas to paper. As with the original conceptualization of a proposal idea, the staff in the office can provide assistance in the development of a prospectus or preliminary proposal, by reviewing the prospectus with the proposal writer. It is always helpful to solicit reviews of one's written materials from peers, since a proposal should be reviewed for both academic content and proposal format. The best source of such a review is an experienced proposal writer in your own discipline.

The Education Research staff can assist in reviewing the proposal format with you to help insure that the structure of the proposal is as sound as it can be before the final draft is written. We also can have the prospectus typed for you if your home academic department or office can not do so.

The Writing of the Final Proposal

The final proposal is obviously all yours. Nevertheless, the office is organized to help you at this stage as well. When needed, a file of "boiler plate" descriptions (prepared descriptions of different facets of the College which are often necessary parts of proposal: the overall institution, the computer center, the library, special research or academic centers, and so forth) are available. Proposal writers who need to integrate such information in their proposals can secure these prepared descriptions and adapt them to their own special needs. We also recognize the limitations that often exist in getting proposals typed in one's home department. Once every effort to use departmental word processing has been made, we will make typing services available. In this case, use of compatible Microsoft Word 4.0 and NBI software systems can prove most helpful. In addition, the office will assist in the preparation of all appropriate forms for the proposal, including budget forms. We can provide you with budget advice and information, such as indirect cost and fringe benefit rates. Finally, if received with sufficient time prior to submission, we will proofread the final proposal to catch any typographical errors.

The Submission of the Proposal

Staff in the office handle all required submission procedures. Every proposal, with the exception of individual awards, requires the signature of

appropriate university officials to ensure both fiscal and academic support for the project in the event of funding. The office assumes responsibility for securing all necessary signatures on the appropriate forms and making all necessary copies of the proposal and mailing those copies to the agency or foundation. In fact, once the proposal is in the office, your job is almost done until the project is funded. *Proposals should be submitted to Education Research at least a week before a postmarked deadline and ten days before a received deadline, so the final proposal can be proofed, and all internal and external submission procedures executed.*

Post Award Activities

When a proposal receives funding, the office is prepared to offer several types of assistance. The primary responsibility for operating the budget is with the principal investigator. The Office of Education Research has current information on project budgets, and staff are available to help resolve any budget questions that arise. In addition, all principal investigators are contacted near the midpoint and the end of their projects to see if the office can be of any assistance in typing reports or assisting the project in any other way.

Post Rejection Activities

Although we hope that you never will have need of these services, it is an unfortunate fact that even worthwhile projects can go unfunded their first time through the system. In the event that a proposal is rejected, the office will work with the principal investigator to get the same proposal, or another version of it, submitted to the same or another funding source. The first step in the resubmission of a proposal is to obtain and evaluate readers' comments when they are available. Staff in the office will assist the principal investigator in whatever

way possible to obtain readers' comments or other information which might explain the reasons for the proposal's rejection. Discussions with the staff can help in the rewriting or restructuring of the proposal. In a way, proposals are like publications in that initial rejections should be utilized as incentives to try again. We all know stories of highly significant or successful books which went through multiple rejections before they were published. (B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two* was rejected some dozen times.) Good proposals are not different.

Additional Support

In addition to these services related directly to the acquisition of external funding, Education Research provides a variety of support for research and professional activities. This support is generally viewed as "seed money" for the direct or indirect development of projects which have potential for external funding. However, support is available for projects for which external funding may not be immediately available. Financial support to help cover page costs, travel, supplies, typing, and other expenses related to research and the dissemination of research is available. The College's Research Advisory Committee also makes recommendations to the Dean concerning small research grants and summer research assistance which can possibly be used for the purchase of research equipment, supplies necessary for a research project, or travel involved in research. Faculty should submit proposals outlining their research project and the need for research assistance.

Obviously, all of the above services are limited by budgetary consideration. However, Education Research is committed to serving and supporting faculty in their research, proposal writing, and scholarly activity. Information concerning any of this support may be acquired by simply dialing X4-8037 on campus.

Office of Education Research:

Staff Profiles

Dr. Paul G. Kussrow, Director of Education Research, has a Ph.D. in Administration and Supervision from the University of Michigan, and he holds rank as a professor in the Department of Educational Administration and Higher Education. His responsibilities include the general administration of the College's research program and the formulation and direction of policies, staffing and organization, and fiscal operations.

Ms. Jeanne Elick, Proposal Development Specialist, holds a B.A. in English and has completed her coursework and comprehensive exams for her master's. She has major responsibility for and management of the College of Education's process and procedures necessary for development and timely submission of pre-proposals and full applications for external funding and is also available for assistance in proposal writing and development, identification and analysis of funding sources, and the conducting of funding searches.

Ms. Linda B. Myers, Fiscal Officer for the College of Education, supervises both the College's appropriated and extramural funds, and also assists in the preparation of proposal budget's dissemination, and proposal "boiler plate" (certifications, authorizations, compliance forms, etc.). Linda advises on the proper cost share/overhead regulations and the proper balance of line-items within budgets. She may be reached at X4-6869.

Ms. Rhonda Johnson, Financial Coordinator, will assist you once your grant is funded to establish a budget account number for related expenditures. Rhonda will also reconcile your grants account in cooperation with the Grants and Contracts Office located in Whitehurst.

Ms. Julie Stripling, Senior Word Processing Technician and secretary to the Director of Education Research, works closely with the Proposal Development Specialist, faculty, staff and departmental representatives of the College to conduct literature searches, and type and format reports, manuscripts, and proposals, while also serving as the NBI system administrator.